



Tennessee First to the Top Monthly Update

September 2011

- **Standards and Assessments** – The Department of Education continues to guide school systems in the understanding and implementation of Common Core State Standards. At this point, over 4,000 teachers and administrators have attended sessions on the Common Core State Standards. Department personnel have also presented at teacher in-service trainings for several school systems. Most schools have begun implementation of CCSS in grades K-2 this school year. Trainings are scheduled across the state in October and November at four locations to begin a deeper look at the standards and to train teachers on designing instruction around these K-2 standards. The TDOE is also conducting a pilot on CCSS using the PARCC implementation guide. This pilot group is comprised of instructional leaders from both rural and urban systems, and the first meeting was completed in August. The technology work group attended the State Education Technology Directors Association conference in Chicago in August, where they shared progress and implementation strategies.
- **Data** –The department selected Choice Solutions, Inc's technical and cost proposal to develop the Early Warning Data System, and the contract was finalized on August 8th, 2011. A full beta system should be ready for rollout by March 2012 with statewide rollout by June 2012. Department staff have begun work with the contractor to develop specific timeline-oriented plans. In the meantime, the Tennessee Department of Education has worked to generate school-level reports to provide instructional leaders with intermediary access to early warning indicator data.
- **Great Teachers and Leaders** – TDOE has partnered with The New Teacher Project to launch a new web page with a multitude of evaluation resources, updates, upcoming events and other information on TEAM (<http://www.tn.gov/education>). TEAM staff also worked closely with technical advisors, assessment division staff, the Commissioner and SAS (our value-added provider) to finalize the year-one plans for both the 15% student achievement measures and the year-one plans for assessing student growth in non-tested grades and subjects. TEAM staff are beginning work to pilot assessments for the 35% growth component in several non-tested grades and subjects in districts across the state.

As the school year begins, the department continues to make online courses available to teachers, and on the ground support is being provided to LEAs as they implement formative instructional practices, analyze data, and work toward compensation reform. Discussions with Battelle For Kids continue on how to incorporate the learning management system with other state supported professional development for teachers and principals. LEAs receiving grants from the Innovation Acceleration and Teacher Incentive Funds are moving forward with their

approved strategic compensation plans. Regional trainings on strategic compensation implementation are scheduled for the end of September.

- **School Turnaround** –The Achievement School District team is continuing to work with internal and external partners to develop and launch a strategic plan. The co-management implementation model for the 2011-2012 school year has been finalized and disseminated to all schools. The MOU for the other eight eligible schools has also been distributed for signature by relevant parties. ASD field staff have been assigned to each ASD school to coordinate resources and turnaround supports supplied by the Department. Trainings for schools, turnaround partners, and local district staff continue. The ASD charter school application closed on September 15, and seven complete applications were received and are currently under review. Effect size data generated by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) on the effectiveness of Tennessee charter schools was also released. These effect-scores will determine existing charters eligibility for the i3 grant application.
- **STEM** – After conducting a review process to score the proposals that were submitted to form a Middle and East TN Regional STEM Innovation Hub, the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN) decided not to fund the proposals as submitted. Instead, the TSIN is working with those entities to strengthen their applications through technical assistance provided by Battelle Memorial Institute and partners in the OH STEM Learning Network and will consider their re-written proposals for funding in October 2011. THE TSIN also held information sessions with STEM stakeholders in Northeast TN (Johnson City), West TN (Memphis) and Southeast TN (Chattanooga) in advance of the release of the next RFP to fund two more STEM Platform Schools and two more Regional Innovation Hubs. THE TSIN also completed negotiations to provide funding for the Knox STEM Academy in Knoxville. The Knox STEM Academy opened its doors to its first 9th and 10th graders on August 15th.
- **Local Education Agency Plans** – The Department has received Year Two scope of work proposals from all Tennessee districts and has completed its review. The scopes of work have been reviewed by an internal committee with representatives from the Field Service Centers, early and middle grades content support, and the First to the Top Oversight office. Nearly 100 districts have been awarded year two funds and the remaining 40 are in various stages of the approval process.